Interreg Danube Region

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DIGI4Care

Digital follow-up care for cardiovascular patients

Policy Factsheet

Recommendations to support national decision making in taking up digital medical technologies prepared by Anita Sackl and Johannes Weiss (Gesundheit Österreich GmbH)

Key messages

1. **35 % of all deaths are caused by cardiovascular disease. This makes it the number 1 cause of death.**
2. **Chronic heart disease is one of the most common causes of repeated hospital admissions among older people.**
3. **To reduce the burden on health caused by cardiovascular diseases, investment is needed in prevention, early diagnosis and integrated care.**

Learnings & Results

The INTERREG Danube Transnational Project „Transforming patient journeys through digital innovation in healthcare across the Danube Region", **DIGI4Care** for short, has funded a **pilot named „I-WEAR**" on the use of **digital health in the aftercare, rehabilitation and long-term care** of patient with cardiovascular diseases such as acute coronary syndrome (ACS) and chronic heart failure. The pilot model specifically **addressed a gap in the patient pathway reflecting a current lack of aftercare for post-intensive care patients**, who in addition to CVD, may also suffer from cognitive and psychological disorders (Post-Intensive-Care Syndrom).

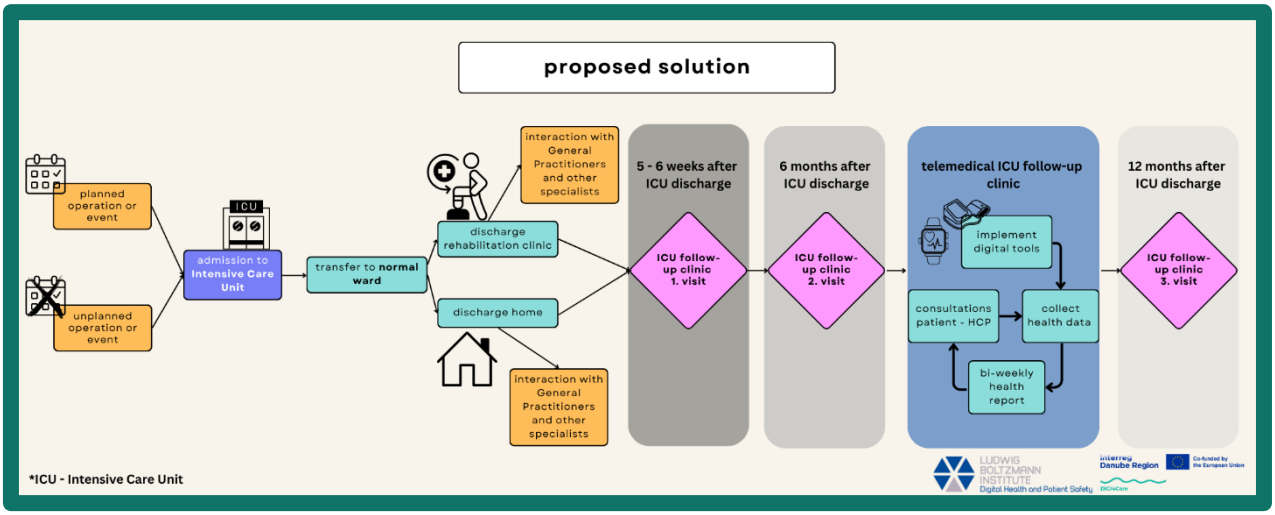
The pilot was implemented by the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute (LBI) for Digital Health and Patient Safety in 2025 at the Vienna General Hospital. It examined the **integration of digital technologies into existing care processes,** user-friendliness for patients and medical staff, and the specific added value of continuous data collection.

The devices used included wearable equipment (e.g. Garmin Vivosmart), smart scales (Garmin Index) and blood pressure monitors (OMRON), which measure parameters such as heart rate, activity (step count), blood pressure and weight. The data was regularly transmitted to a medical platform (Fitrockr) and analysed by specialist staff.

Key findings

- The use of wearables in post-ICU care is proving to be widely accepted and feasible.
- The technical infrastructure (apps, devices, software) must be specifically adapted to the need of patient groups and further development.
- Comprehensible data visualisation tailored to the target patient group is a key factor in the success of digital monitoring solutions and the value they generate.

The concept is readily adaptable to other chronic conditions (e.g. heart failure, hypertension, pulmonary rehabilitation, diabetes and multimorbidity) as well as to different levels of care, building on the existing digital infrastructure and established care programmes. Key requirements include integration into ELGA, coordination with existing disease management programmes, and clear billing and coding structures.



Benefits for policymakers

- Wearables enable structured, data-driven after-care by detecting early signs of deterioration and reducing the number of unplanned read-missions.
- Continuous monitoring identifies high-risk patients and enables early intervention.
- Telemonitoring improves continuity between intensive care, rehabilitation and outpatient care (see figure).
- Automated data capture partially replaces manual documentation but is currently limited due to restricted interoperability.
- Telemonitoring solutions have the potential to help manage resources and offer opportunities for further development.
- Patient involvement, self-management, secondary prevention and structured, ongoing communication between patients and healthcare providers are supported.

Recommendations for policymakers

Driving forward integration into standard care
The high level of acceptance and feasibility should be leveraged to explore the possibility of gradually integrating these approaches into standard care and to develop sustainable, scalable care models.

Development of technical infrastructure using a user-centred approach
Technical systems need to be adapted, with a focus on usability, accessibility and reliable support structures, to ensure widespread adoption in day-to-day healthcare practice.

Expand system integration systematically
The connection to ELGA, the establishment of standardised digital workflows and data visualisation tailored to specific user groups should be implemented systematically to ensure efficient and interoperable use.